

# Midwest Folklore

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# Midwest Folklone

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BY PETER A. MUNCH  
*Southern Illinois University*  
*Carbondale, Illinois*

## TEN THOUSAND SWEDES: REFLECTIONS ON A FOLKLORE MOTIF

**I**N AN INTERESTING REPORT on Norwegian-American folklore in the Indiana University Archives,<sup>1</sup> reference is made to a saying which, I believe, is well known (and cherished!) by all Norwegians in the New World:

Ten thousand Swedes  
ran through the weeds,  
—chased by one Norwegian!

The popularity of this little mock rhyme is significant in itself and reveals something about the good-natured rivalry between Swedes and Norwegians that still persists in many parts of the United States. The saying is easily classified with numerous jests and anecdotes boasting the Norwegians at the expense of the Swedes, such as the story about the Norwegian who was mistaken for a Swede because he had just gotten out of the hospital after a long illness.

A connection is seen between this motif and seven versions of a tale, also found in the Indiana University Archives, about a victory for a small group of Norwegians against heavy odds, which appears to have reference to an episode in the so-called Kalmar War (1611-13) between Denmark-Norway and Sweden.<sup>2</sup> During this war, a party of Scottish mercenaries, hired by the Swedish king Gustav Adolf, attempted to march from Romsdal, on the west coast of Norway, to the Swedish border but were attacked and defeated by Norwegian peasants at Kringen in Gudbrandsdal on the 26th of August, 1612. This is the so-called "Sinclair campaign," tales of which remained a living oral tradition among the local population up to the present time.<sup>3</sup>

The tales of the Sinclair campaign are well known in Norway even outside of Gudbrandsdal, particularly from the popular *Sinclair Ballad*, written by the folk poet Edvard Storm (1749-94), a minister's son born and raised in Vågå, not far from Kringen. The ballad was very popular during the latter part of the 19th century and found its way into several popular song collections published during this period.<sup>4</sup> It still holds its own as one of the standard popular songs in Norway as evidenced by its inclusion, in an abbreviated form (and with an English translation by W. S. Walker), in a more recent collection of Norwegian popular songs and music, *Norway Sings*, published in 1950 by Norsk Musikforlag, Oslo. It is hardly an exaggeration to state that the Sinclair Ballad is, even today, known and sung all over Norway.<sup>5</sup>

It is evident that the Sinclair tales are known among Norwegians in America as well, although they are hardly as widespread and popular as they are in Norway. Three of the seven victory tales reported from the Indiana University Archives are clearly referable to the incident in the Kalmar War. The three versions were collected in Minnesota in 1947. It is also obvious that an important source of this tradition even in America is Edvard Storm's *Sinclair Ballad*.

According to one of the local tales, Sinclair went on shore on a small island on the coast of Norway and there received a threatening warning from a woman: "Wait till you meet the valley people," she said, "then you'll get to bow your neck and kiss the turf!" Sinclair swore that when he had conquered the country he would return and "chop her to pieces."<sup>6</sup> In the ballad, the woman has become a mermaid (Norwegian: *havfrue*), and so also in the two Minnesota versions including this motif, one of them quoting directly from the ballad.<sup>7</sup>

## Version A—"from an elderly couple visiting the United States":

The Swedes paid a large sum of money to a Scottish nobleman to outfit a ship and attack Norway from the west. . . . As Sir Sinclair crossed the North Sea, a mermaid rose out of the water and said, "If you see the coast of Norway, you will never return alive."

## Version B—"from a retired Norwegian-American pastor":

The *havfrue* was a kind of sea-hag that came up to the surface and foretold events. When the Scotch conquered Sinclair and he came to Norway to fight for the money paid by the Scotch government, the *frue* warned him: "If you come to Norway, I tell you the truth, you'll never come back alive."

Sinclair answered: "You evil troll, always you prophesy disaster. If I ever catch you, I'll chop you to pieces."

The *havfrue's* prophecy came true. Sinclair did not come back.

For a comparison, I would like to quote three stanzas from the ballad:

3. Maanen skinner om Natten bleg,  
De Vover saa sagtelig trille;  
En Havfrue op af Vandet steeg,  
Hun spaaede Herr Zinklar ilde.
4. "Vend om, vend om, du Skotske Mand,  
Det gielder dit Liv saa fage!  
Kommer du til Norrig, jeg siger for sand,  
Ret aldrig du kommer tilbage."
5. "Leed er din Sang, du giftige Trolde!  
Altidens du spaaer om Ulykker.  
Fanger jeg dig engang i min Vold,  
Jeg lader dig hugge i Stykker."

There is also evidence of a direct connection of the Minnesota versions with the oral tradition as known in Norway. Versions A and C make reference to the prominent figure *Pillar-Guri*, a young girl who, according to the local tradition, warned the peasants by blowing her *prillar-horn* from a vantage point across the valley as the Scotchmen approached.<sup>8</sup> One of the Minnesota versions makes her the "leader" of the Norwegians. Version A:

. . . As [Sir Sinclair] sailed into the fjord, an old woman living in the mountains named "Pella Guri" sounded the alarm. The women, children, and the old men gathered for the defense of their land. They cut huge quantities of timber and fastened them at a strategic place on the mountain where it juts out over the fjord. When the ships passed that point, the timber was released, and the Scotch fleet was destroyed.

## Version C:

When Norway and England were at war, Saint Sinclair, a warrior from England together with a crew, became the victim of the tricky Norwegians whose leader was the prominent character, "Pilar Guri." A band of

Norwegians who hid in the mountains loosened the rocks around them. Sinclair and his crew were in the boat below. When she blew her horn, the English warriors were covered with the stones.

The Pillar-Guri motif, which looms large in the oral tradition in Norway, is not mentioned in Storm's ballad, at least not in the versions found in the popular song collections.

On the other hand, the Minnesota versions show certain deviations from the Norwegian tradition which may possibly be regarded as "generalizations" of a tale that has been removed from its locale and cultural milieu. For one thing, the name of the locality, Kringen, where the battle was fought, has dropped out, although this is a firmly established element in the Norwegian tradition. Versions A and C have the Scottish fleet destroyed even before the men got on shore. More pertinent to the question of a possible connection between the Sinclair tales and the mock rhyme about the 10,000 Swedes is the fact that two of the Minnesota versions apparently have forgotten that the Swedes were involved at all. Version B makes Sinclair a mercenary of the "Scotch government," and version C has Norway and England at war and makes Sinclair "a warrior from England." It is characteristic that the one version (A) which does recognize the role of the Swedes in the affair was collected "from an elderly couple visiting the United States," obviously from Norway.

Nevertheless, the three versions of the "victory legend" that we have considered so far are easily identified as variants of the Sinclair tale. All of them contain specific elements which are characteristic of this tale alone, such as particularly the identity of the villain (Sinclair) and of the heroine (Pillar-Guri), as well as the general course of action.

The four remaining versions reported from the Indiana collection are of a more general nature. There is nothing in these versions to identify them with any particular historical event, and the action is rendered in general terms of standard folklore motifs. Most specific are versions E and G. Version E relates an encounter of "twenty Vikings" with "the entire Scottish army" and could be regarded as a corrupt variant of the Sinclair tale if it were not for the fact that it tells an entirely different story:

Many years ago there were twenty Vikings who were in danger of running headlong into the entire Scottish army. The leader of the Vikings saw only one chance for the small group of men. He told his men to gather all of the kegs of beer that they could find and place them in a circle. When the Scottish army approached, they saw the kegs of beer and stopped to quench their thirst. After a time, the Scotchmen became inebriated. The Viking leader told his men to march around the circle of Scotchmen. The

men of the Scottish army, owing to the fact that they could not see well, thought that they were surrounded and surrendered to the twenty Vikings.

The Swedes are the enemies in version G, which places the episode in the 19th century and attributes it to an imaginary Norwegian war of independence against Sweden:

From the war in which the Norwegians won their independence from Sweden in the 1800's, comes this story. The Swedes were in a castle and outnumbered the oncoming Norwegians five to one. The Norwegians, however, strung their men out and marched them around and around the castle and scared the Swedes into thinking they were outnumbered terrifically; hence the Swedes surrendered.

The leading motif in both these versions is *capture by deception*, making the enemy think he is outnumbered by having the soldiers march in a circle. In Norwegian tradition, this motif is particularly associated with the conquest in 1719 of the Swedish fortress Karlsten, near Marstrand in Bohuslän, by Peder Wessel Tordenskiold, Norwegian-Danish naval hero of the Great Nordic War (1700-1720). This tradition gave rise to the phrase "Tordenskiold's soldiers," used in Norway even today in reference to any bluff involving numbers. Version G in the Indiana collection could be a vague recollection of that story. But the motif is too common in warfare traditions to be really descriptive of any particular legend.

The two remaining versions of a "victory legend" in the Indiana collection, D and F, are the only ones that tell about the encounter of *one* Norwegian with a number of Swedes (in version D, 10,000 of them). These are also the only two versions which have been explicitly associated with the "10,000 Swedes" rhyme by the informants themselves. Also, they are the most general of all the versions with no indication of time, place, the identity of the actors, or any of those specific traits which are usually characteristic of the truly historical folktale. Version D was collected in Michigan in 1950 from a boy who had it from his Swedish father:

The Swedes and the Norwegians were fighting. 10,000 Swedes were in a valley surrounded by mountains with only one pass in which they could enter or leave. One Norwegian put on a robe, which gave him supernatural looks, and came running down from the mountains. All the Swedes began to run and they left the valley. We say, "10,000 Swedes were chased through the weeds by one Norwegian."

Version F was told in 1952 by a Norwegian student at Michigan State University:

When the Swedish troops were in Norway and marching through a mountain pass, a Norwegian soldier saw them from above and by throwing

rocks and boulders down on them he wiped them out, either killing or trapping all of them. This led to the phrase, "10,000 Swedes chased out of the weeds by one Norwegian."

Although version F vaguely suggests the Battle of Kringen, it is hard to see any traditional connection between these anecdotes and either the Sinclair tale or the tale about Tordenskiold's soldiers. I strongly suspect that these versions have generated from the rhyme, having possibly been made up even by the informants themselves in order to "explain" the rhyme, applying well known folklore motifs such as the rock pile (possibly by a vague recollection of the Sinclair tale) and the magic robe. This is quite conceivable, especially if the untrained student collectors have given the slightest indication that such an "explanation" might be of interest.

Seen on this background, it is not very likely that the "10,000 Swedes" motif or its various expressions, either the mock rhyme itself or any of the related "Swede stories," have been derived from the Sinclair tale or any other victory legend from Norway. This, however, does not mean that there is no relationship between them. It might be useful in this connection to distinguish between "content" and "form" of a tradition, or to use Opler's distinction between culture "themes" and their "expressions."<sup>9</sup> According to this view, every culture is characterized by certain general ideas or "values" (*themes*), declared or implied, which become manifest in specific patterns of behavior, attitude, or thought, described as their *expressions*.

With regard to the delight that Norwegians in America appear to take in deriding the Swedes more than any other group, it is obvious that this is a theme which has been transplanted from the Old World. During about four centuries of Danish rule, with numerous wars between Denmark-Norway and Sweden, the Norwegians had become conditioned to think of "the Swede" as the traditional enemy. And when Norway was finally ceded from Denmark and united with Sweden under one king in 1814, the traditional military strife was soon to be replaced by a no less bitter political opposition to Swedish supremacy, which eventually culminated in the dissolution of the union in 1905. Particularly to the Norwegians of the late 19th century was this a vital concern because it was felt that the national identity of the Norwegian people was not fully recognized by the world, especially in relation to the Swedes. And so the negative side of this strong sense of national identity was directed particularly against the neighbor to the east.

Important—although by no means the most important—expressions of this theme were found in tales about greatness in warfare.



Folk tradition in Norway even during the 19th century was rich in tales about the alleged atrocities of Swedish troops campaigning in Norway during the "Danish period" as well as about heroic and clever deeds accomplished by Norwegians in the many encounters with the Swedes. This is the background for the popularity of the Sinclair tale, the tale about Tordenskiold's soldiers, and hundreds of similar legends.

It is quite obvious that this theme was retained and cultivated by the Norwegians who migrated to America during the second half of the 19th century. The Norwegian settlers in the Middle West had a strong feeling of national identity as Norwegians and took a live and active interest in Norway's strivings for political recognition and sovereignty over against Sweden. It may be significant that the peaks of Norwegian migration to America in the 1860's and the 1880's coincided with periods in which the political tension between the two countries was particularly high. And, apparently, the feelings were re-enforced as Norwegians and Swedes settled down side by side, increasing the frequency of contact. Besides, there was the constant need to point out and emphasize one's national identity over against other Americans who were wont to lump Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes together as "Scandinavians," a habit which annoyed the Scandinavians no end, especially the Norwegians, whose strivings for recognition of their national identity in the Old World had been strong and recent. In this way, the negative attitude of Norwegians toward the Swedes was even transmitted to the following generations, and there are indications that the rivalry between these two closely related nationality groups has persisted more vigorously in the United States than in Scandinavia itself.

At the same time, the rivalry between the two groups had to find new and different forms of expression. Military achievements of the one group over the other were hardly meaningful any more in the new situation, and emphasis on this motif was not even proper in relation to the general values, or leading themes, of the American frontier. But a milder form of expression of group differentiation, not entirely unfamiliar to the immigrant, was offered by the culture of the frontier in the deriding joke, which differs from the traditional folklore by being obviously made up, with no pretention of relating to actual events.

If we look upon the "10,000 Swedes" motif in this light, it may explain the fact that most of the jests and anecdotes of this category are definitely American in their setting and obviously were created

in America. The fact that the mock rhyme itself is built around an *English* rhyme, *Swedes —weeds* (which would be lost in translation), points in the same direction. To my knowledge, none of these jests and anecdotes have counterparts in Norway. I cannot even recall ever having heard any of these "Swede stories" told in the Norwegian language; they always seem to be given in English, even if a switch in language would be involved.<sup>10</sup>

All this may serve as an indication that these anecdotes and jests, including the mock rhyme about the ten thousand Swedes running through the weeds chased by one Norwegian, have not been derived from tales or legends transmitted from Norway.<sup>11</sup> They have probably sprung up in the mixed ethnic milieu of the American Middle West. Their main function seems to have been to boast the Norwegians and deride the Swedes in the eyes of Americans, thereby emphasizing a social differentiation, often ignored by outsiders, but of the greatest importance to the Norwegians.

Such partisan rhymes and ditties are quite commonly associated with social differentiations in many different cultures—the oldest known example may be found in Genesis 49. They offer a clear illustration of the role of folklore in an almost subliminal system of social control: "collective representations." Ideas and values, as well as the "proper" attitudes to them, are transmitted and re-enforced from generation to generation by means of catching phrases, which seemingly have an entirely different function but become popular to the extent as they do express an important culture theme. In our case we are concerned with one of the most important themes in any culture, that of collective identity.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jan Brunvand, "Norwegian-American Folklore in the Indiana University Archives," *Midwest Folklore*, VII (1957), pp. 221-228.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225-228.

<sup>3</sup> Toward the end of the 19th century, tales and fragments relating to the Sinclair campaign were collected from the various localities of Romsdal and the upper Gudbrandsdal region by a local teacher, who put them together into a *soge*; see Andreas Austlid, *Sinklar-Soga* (Oslo, 1899). Probably a more authentic source to the Sinclair tales (which, however, was not available to me) would be H. P. S. Krag, *Sagn samlede i Gudbrandsdalen om Slaget ved Kringlen* (Kristiania, 1838); cf. R. Th. Christiansen and Knut Liestøl, "Norske Folkesegner" in *Nordisk Kultur*, vol. IX B, *Folksägner och Folksagor*, ed. C. W. von Sydow, (Stockholm, Oslo, and København [1931], pp. 161-180).

<sup>4</sup> E. g., *Den nyeste Visebog for Hvermand* (4th edition—34th thousand—published in 1901), and Karl Seip, *En liten visebok for hjemmet* (416th thousand printed in 1923). Both of these collections of popular songs were standard equipment in homes and schools in Norway around the turn of the century.

<sup>5</sup> An interesting folk belief was associated with the Sinclair Ballad—at least I remember from my childhood in Bergen being told that the singing of



the ballad would bring rainy weather, as many days of it as the number of stanzas sung.

<sup>6</sup> Austlid, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> I should like to remark that I have not had access to several Norwegian sources, the most important of which probably is H. P. S. Krag, *op. cit.* Neither have I seen the complete versions of the Indiana collection. My conclusions have been drawn from the partial quotations in the *Midwest Folklore* article (Brunvand, *op. cit.*).

<sup>8</sup> Other forms of the name are *Pilar-Guri*, *Prillar-Guri*, and *Pella-Guri*. The form most commonly found in Norway is *Pillar-Guri*, although originally it probably was *Prillar-Guri*. The girl obviously got her nickname from her skill in blowing the *prillarhorn*, a musical instrument made from a goat's horn.

<sup>9</sup> Morris Edward Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *American Journal of Sociology*, LI (1945), pp. 198-206.

<sup>10</sup> In the bilingual situation of the Norwegian settlements in the Middle West, jests and jokes were seldom translated from the one language to the other. When this was done in order to accommodate an occasional monolingual listener, there was always a feeling that the joke lost its point.

<sup>11</sup> Mr. Brunvand has kindly drawn my attention to the similarity between the "10,000 Swedes" rhyme and a line in "The Battle of the Boyne Water," a ditty recorded by Bayard from Fayette County, Pennsylvania in 1943 (Samuel Preston Bayard, "The British Folk Tradition," in: George Korson, ed., *Pennsylvania Songs and Legends*, [Philadelphia, 1949], pp. 47-48):

Fierce and long the battle raged,  
Till, crushed by the fearful slaughter,  
Ten thousand micks got killed with picks  
At the battle of Boyen Waters.

Bayard's text is a "burlesqued and garbled fragment of the stirring Anglo-Irish piece 'The Boyne Water,'" which refers to the defeat of James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Apparently, the Pennsylvania ditty served a social function similar to that of the "10,000 Swedes" rhyme, boasting one group over another—in this case the English over the Irish. Bayard reports that one had only to sing this fragment "to bring on a small riot if any Irishmen were within earshot."

Similarly, in Melbourne and Sydney, "children used to gather round convent schools . . . on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne, chanting:

The Irishmen ran down the hill,  
The Englishmen ran after,  
And mony a Pat got a bullet in his back  
At the Battle of Boy'an Wather.  
Up to me knees in shandygaff,  
Up to me knees in slauther,  
Up to me knees in Irish blood  
At the Battle of Boy'an Wather."

See Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (Oxford 1959), 343n. In these cases, the partisan ditty does show a direct line of tradition from a specific historical event in the Old World. As shown above, I cannot see a similar connection for the 10,000 Swedes rhyme. However, from South Bend, Indiana, comes this little ditty delivered in a mock-Scandinavian accent (courtesy of Mr. Frank Hoffmann, Indiana University, who collected the rhyme, and communicated to me by Mr. Brunvand):

Ten thousand Swedes went through the weeds  
In the Battle of Copenhagen;  
Ten thousand Jews jumped out of their shoes,  
They smelt them frying bacon.

The "Battle of Copenhagen" may refer to the naval battle between the English and the Dano-Norwegian fleets in the harbor of Copenhagen on the 2nd of April, 1801, or to the bombardment and conquest of Copenhagen by the English, September 2-5, 1807 (usually the former). In neither case were the Swedes involved, and the connection of the 10,000 Swedes rhyme with this battle is obviously secondary. It may possibly have come about through a diffusion of form from the Battle of the Boyne ditty.

BY SIDNEY SNOOK  
*Elizabethtown, Illinois*

## ECHOES ON THE RIVERS

**T**HE OLD STEAMBOATS which once traveled America's western rivers have drifted downstream into some cove of green willows around the last bend, but the gentle splash of their paddlewheels and the melody of their whistles still echo in song and story.

Out of many yesterdays the names of the packets, along with those of master and pilot and crew, resound in the river country although it has been a long day since a distant whistle and a plume of smoke raised a glad cry of "thar she's a-comin'" along the levees of the Ohio and the Mississippi, the Cumberland and the Tennessee.

Take the name of "Quaker Oats." In something so essentially up-to-the-moment as the Government Light Lists for Mississippi River runs, there appears, oddly enough, the "Quaker Oats" light

on the Kentucky shore just below Cairo, Illinois where the Ohio flows into the Mississippi. It is named, of course, for old "Quaker Oats" himself, Captain Calvin Blazier, pilot for many years on steamboats from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. And why, one might ask idly, was he called "Quaker Oats?" Very simple, really; his comrades thought he looked just like the picture on a box of Quaker Oats cereal because he always wore his hair shoulder-length. And why? Just because he wanted to wear it that way.

In the same locality on the Missouri shore stands another light named for Captain Henry B. Nye, "Poor Boy" Nye, that is, which nickname had reference not to his purse but to his long, lean build. It was the redoubtable "Poor Boy" who brought the old Steamer "Sprague," the largest towboat ever built for inland waters, down the Ohio River with fifty-six barges of coal. A mere 5.9 acres of barges! The "Sprague" was the "Big Mama." The reason, obvious—she was big.

Even so did the Steamer "John Gilbert" get her name of "Peanut John." She brought enormous cargoes of peanuts out of the upper Tennessee region. Her record haul was 20,000 sacks, piled high and wide on all decks, but the "City of Memphis" was not too far from taking away her name and fame since she edged into second place with some 18,000 sacks. They were, as the old saying goes, simply "dragging their guards."

Most of the packets got their fond nicknames from the main cargo they carried. The Steamer "W. A. Johnson" with her burden of pig-iron was called "Pig-eye Johnson," and the old "W. F. Nisbet" might just as well have been "Corn" Nisbet because time and again she picked up as many as 5,000 sacks of corn along a mile-stretch of Ohio riverbank. The big cotton carriers, such as the "Grand Republic," the "James Howard," or the "Addie E. Faison," were so loaded on all decks that they resembled an animated cotton bale, a common enough sight in the old packet days.

One steamboat builder of the era evidently loved his friends. Whenever he built another boat, and there were many, he honored still another friend by giving the new craft that individual's name. Captain Thomas G. Ryman, known on the rivers as "Cap'n T. G.," ran his fleet in the Cumberland River trade. An orphaned child, he was given a home by Reuben Dunbar, a fisherman at Dunbar's Landing. Years later, when Ryman built his first steamboat, he called her the "R. Dunbar." Then there came the "H. W. Buttorff," the "W. K. Phillips," the "Bob Dudley," the "E. T. Ragon," the

"B. S. Rhea," the "I. T. Rhea," the "H. G. Hill," and the "Jo Horton Fall." No matter how many boats he built, Ryman had enough friends to go around.

In his youth Ryman was a happy-go-lucky sort, but after he "got religion," as the story goes, his changed outlook showed up promptly and graphically on his steamboats. Religious pictures and inscriptions appeared on all of them.

The Steamer "Bob Dudley" henceforth was known along the rivers as "Eternity Bob" because the single word, "Eternity," in large letters was emblazoned above the cabin door.

A large oil painting of Christ walking on the water, a life-size figure, was hung in the cabin of the Steamer "R. Dunbar," and a Biblical quotation, "I am the light of the world," placed over the entrance.

On the Steamer "J. B. Richardson" the clerk's office displayed two legends, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" and "With my right hand, I will guide the rivers."

The Steamer "John L. Lowry," of another line, had an inscription of a different kind. It was written in Latin. Above the cabin door appeared the words "*Nil Sine Labor.*" It was something for the brawny roustabouts to ponder.

Many of the packets took the names of their owners. Among those of the Fowler Line, steamboat builders and operators in the lower Ohio River region for generations, were the "Dick Fowler," the "Gus Fowler" and the "Joe Fowler." The "Joe Fowler" was called the "Jumpin' Joe" since she was said to "fly down the river like a fawn," but it was the "Dick Fowler" which was described as the "fastest thing on inland waters" because she consistently broke records in her river runs.

Aboard the "Joe Fowler" the roustabouts used to sing of "Stavin' Chain," heroic giant of the waterways, whether real or imaginary, who was capable of prodigious feats in handling freight. The general admonition was that "evuhbody ought to be lak Stavin' Chain."

For years the story has been told around Paducah of the greeting of Captain Joe Fowler, progenitor of the packet line, to a lady steamboat tourist who came across the cobblestone levee one bright morning with a Mexican hairless dog in her arms. Captain Fowler, seated in front of his boat store, arose, removed his hat, and addressed her in courtly manner:

"Good morning, Madam, might a stranger so far intrude upon you as to ask a question?"

"You may, Sir," she replied.

"Thank you, Madam. Might I ask if that is a dog you are carrying?"

"Yes, it is a Mexican hairless."

Captain Fowler pondered briefly.

"It it your only dog?"

The reply was "yes."

"Then all I can say, Madam, you are mighty nigh out of dog."

Sons and daughters and assorted "kinfolk" supplied names for packet after packet appearing on the rivers. More than half a century ago Captain Gordon C. Greene launched his first steamboating venture, and Greene Line packets became a familiar sight along the waterways. At the pilot wheel of the "Greeneland," one of the earliest, was none other than Captain Greene's young bride, Captain Mary Greene, later to be known the length of the rivers as "Cap'n Mary" or simply "Ma Greene," the only woman master and pilot on the Ohio River other than Cap'n Callie French, of the showboat saga. The Steamer "Gordon C. Greene" took the name of the master of the line, and other packets, the "Tom Greene" and the "Chris Greene" were named for sons of the Greene clan.

Captain James Lee, who began to build steamboats before the Civil War, put a lot of "Lees" on the rivers, named for his four sons and two daughters and no telling who else. There was the "Rosa Lee," the "Georgia Lee," the "Lady Lee" and the "Belle Lee" as well as the "Jim Lee," the "Robert Lee," the "Peters Lee" and the "Stacker Lee." There were more. The "Rees Lee," the "Sadie Lee" and the "Harry Lee." The "Stacker Lee" had all sorts of nicknames, the "Stack," the "Big Smoke," "Stack O' Dolluhs," and the "Bull of the Woods."

Apparently a Lee list could go on and on. There were at least four "Robert E. Lees" on the waterways, one of them of legendary fame as winner of the race with the "Natchez" from New Orleans to St. Louis in record time that never was bested.

The Steamer "Kate Adams," a popular Mississippi River side-wheeler, was known up and down the rivers as the "Lovin' Kate." Two packets of the same name preceded her. Often successive new boats were given the names of a predecessor so that two or three or more might bear the same name down through the years. Even so were the bells and whistles and engines transferred from one packet to another as time went by. It was the "Lovin' Kate" which showed up in the lower Ohio River one summer night with a bright new glow. She had electric lights.

A shout of "here she's a-comin'" along the levee of any river town could have been raised for one of the "belles" of the waterways.

Perhaps the "Arkansas Belle" or the "Tennessee Belle" or the "Belle of St. Louis." It could have been the "Memphis Belle," the "Belle of the Bends," the "Belle of Calhoun" or the "Northern Belle." (Surely, there must have been a beautiful "Southern Belle" somewhere in the procession.) Or it could have been the old showboat, "Lula Belle." The "belles" were popular names.

On the other hand, it may well have been one of the stately "queens" of the river coming into port. Among them were the "Queen City," the "Bay Queen," the "Queen St. Paul" and the "Island Queen." The "Island Queen" was one of the gala moonlight excursion packets which the river fraternity called "tramps." Not pretty, perhaps, but a term of affection nonetheless. The only one of the happy "tramps" still traveling up and down stream is the "Avalon." One of the "queens", of course, is the last survivor, the "Delta Queen," which moves along the current in solitary glory.

Gold and silver, clouds and stars and sunshine found their way into the imaginative names of the steamboats. The "Golden Crown," the "Golden City," the "Golden Eagle," the "Golden Rule" and even the "Gold Dust" were among those that gleamed, to say nothing of the old showboat, "Goldenrod," which was modestly called the "world's greatest showboat." Some of these had handsome golden emblems swinging between their smokestacks.

There was the shine of silver in the old names too. A "Silver Cloud" and a "Silver Bow," a "Silver Moon" and a "Silverthorn." There was a "Red Cloud," a "Morning Star," a "Guiding Star" and "Sunshine", and there was a "Sun," too. Up and downstream flashed the "Northern Light" and a "Rainbow" shone over the river. There was even a "Jack Frost." The Steamer "Red Cloud," old tales will tell, rained down so many sparks from her tall stacks that "the mate's suit of clothes in a week's time looked like a sieve."

Birds flew along the rivers in the steamboat names. A few singing ones, such as "Oriole" and "Redwing," and a lot of bold "Eagles." The "Eagles" were packets of the Leyhe Eagle Packet Company. They were called "Eagle-something-or-other" from the first one, the Steamer "Young Eagle," followed by the "Grey Eagle," the "Spread Eagle," the "Bald Eagle" and the "War Eagle," down to the very last of them, the "Golden Eagle." Through the years successive boats of the Eagle line were given these names. There were, for example, four "War Eagles."

One packet is said to have had a real eagle, a giant bird captured along the upper reaches of the Cumberland River, in her crew. The



handsome creature, which had a wingspread of about eight feet and weighed fifty pounds, became mascot of the Steamer "Grace Devers" and made routine trips in the packet's Cumberland River trade. The proud boast was that the eagle, whose prosaic name was "Bob," could do everything but run the boat. When the whistle sounded, Bob uttered a series of shrieks that startled the quiet Cumberland shores. If the packet happened to be carrying livestock, say several hundred hogs and a hundred head of cattle, then the assorted sounds mingled with the eagle's screams created such a medley as never was heard outside of the Ark.

Many of the packet boats took their names from their home ports, cities and villages along the rivers. Take any city, and the chances are good that there was a steamboat proudly bearing the name. The procession was almost endless. Of course there was the "City of Pittsburgh," the "City of Cincinnati," the "City of Louisville," the "City of Memphis"—St. Louis, New Orleans, Paducah, Nashville, and on and on.

In those days little children often were named for a popular packet. Not for the owner, no indeed; but for the boat itself. There was the "City of Bayou Sara," familiarly called the "B'y Sara," and "B'y Sara" became a happy choice for a little girl's name in the river region.

Some of the states were honored by having their names on the pilot house of a fine packet as well as on the "staterooms" in the cabin; among them were the Steamer "Kentucky" and the "Alabama," the "Buckeye State" and the "Keystone State."

Names of prominent figures of the day often were used. One craft was the Steamer "General Woods," known as the "Workhouse," for an obvious reason no doubt; and there was the Steamer "Will S. Hays," named for a Kentucky poet and newspaperman. Hays, himself, whose newspaper beat was the Louisville riverfront, an important spot in steamboat days, was called "Old Hayseed," but the packet clung to her full-name dignity.

Of the thousands of packets running the rivers in a long line down through the years, none was more appropriately named perhaps than the "Post Boy," built by Captain Henry Shreve, one of the earliest of steamboat builders. The "Post Boy" is said to have been the first steamboat to carry the mail.

But no matter the name of the steamboat, her true identity was her whistle. Townspeople on the levee knew which packet was making port when they heard her faraway whistle. Every steamboat

man loved the whistle on his own boat with vast pride. The story is told of one builder who wanted a whistle bigger and better than any other whistle. But it proved so powerful that when he blew it, there was no steam left to run the boat. Old rivermen maintain that not only could they recognize the boat by her whistle, but even by the engine exhaust through the 'scape pipes. "Easy," they boast, "you could tell by the different sound."

Sharp argument has come down through the years as to which was the "prettiest packet" and which had the most resonant whistle and the sweetest bell. Some boasted of the "R. Dunbar" because she "sat so pretty in the water" while others contended that the Steamer "Clyde" was trim and neat, "just like a pretty woman." The whistle on the Steamer "Sunshine" was so tuned that it made the most beautiful music ever to drift over the water; but, oh no, other legends claim that nothing ever could equal the whistle on the Steamer "J. B. Richardson" whose tones echoed between the narrow Cumberland shores. There was silver in the old bells to give them a "silvery sound." Into the molten metal for casting the bell on the old Steamer "Kentucky" went 500 silver dollars—her ring was "silvery" indeed.

Tall tales were told by men of the rivers in the pilot house of many a steamboat over a cup of black coffee and piece of raisin pie, a steamboat favorite. Prunes were another big favorite, but they were not called "prunes"; they were "anchor strawberries." Some tales are as tall as the steamboat stacks, and have grown taller in the passing years, but the pilot's knowledge of the river is sound tradition. It is, as Captain Fred McCandless, old-time master and pilot tells it, a "sixth sense." "You just know—and you don't know how you know," he says. "You can't put it into words."

The pilot learned the river—the shoreline, the shape of the hills and trees, every bend, every point, every snag, every bar. Even in the dark of a midnight watch, the pilot could tell just where he was at the moment—even by the shadows. One old steamboater's legendary boast was that he could wake up in the middle of the night, take a drink of water right out of the river, and know just what point the boat was passing.

Stories out of the steamboat days attest to a keen rivalry as to who could tell the best and biggest of tales. One good one would be topped by another, and there must have been a twinkle in many an eye. There was the pilot who went aground on an Ohio River bar in low-water season even though the saying was common that



most of the old packets "could run on a heavy dew." The pilot, whose boat was hung up high and dry, saw a camper come ambling down the riverbank to fill a bucket with water. The pilot yelled to him, "What the hell do you mean taking water out of there! You pour it right back." His command carried authority because the camper hastily emptied the bucket back into the river and beat a retreat uphill.

One old favorite that always pyramided pretty close to the top was that of the "hoop snakes" in the Tennessee River country. "Why, there's snakes up there that would wind themselves up and roll 'round like hoops," an old-timer would tell, "and they're dead poison too. I saw one in a hoop, rollin' his-self down hill, right smack down to the river edge. An old wagon was a-standin' there on the bank. Well, sir, that black hoop hit that old wagon, stuck its fangs right into the wagon-tongue. And you reckon what happened? Yessir, that old wagon creaked and shook and shattered and all four wheels fell right off. . . . Them's bad snakes." Superstition too had a big role. No roustabout crew ever wanted a preacher to walk over the stageplank or a white horse taken on board. Bad luck all the way around. There was firm belief that if tragedy struck twice in quick succession, there was sure to be a third. The often quoted example was the loss of the Steamer "Longfellow" which went down in the Ohio. Within a matter of hours the Steamer "I. T. Rhea" was wrecked on a Cumberland River bluff and sank in five minutes. Everybody waited for the third strike: and the Steamer "Rosedale" went down in a storm on the Wabash.

But there are bright and shining highlights in the old tales too. Witness the arrival of the showboat and the joy in the hearts of the river townspeople. Her arrival in town, as she followed springtime up the rivers, was an event to dissipate the commonplace of everyday living like sunshine through a morning mist. She was light and music and charm. The theatrical fare of the "Goldenrod" or the "Cotton Blossom" or "French's New Sensation" or some other of the radiant line may have been purple melodrama, full of villainy and tears and virtue triumphant, but the audiences of the river country took it very seriously. Just how seriously is shown in a story handed down from that day when a troupe of players on the "Greater New York" presented a performance of "The Red Dagger: Or A Kentucky Feud." The play had reached a tense moment when the villain, with his curled mustachios, was about to kidnap the heroine. At that point a spectator in the velvet-draped box overlooking the

stage shouted: "you make one more move toward that little gal and yes, damn you, I'll kill you." There was not the slightest doubt in anybody's mind, on or off stage, that he meant just exactly what he said, because he held a whiskey bottle ready to bring down upon the hapless victim's head. The villain and the gal stopped right where they were, which gave the management time to reach the box and convince the gallant defender of virtue that, after all, it was only make-believe. Innocence and calico always won the victory. "I'd rather wear honest calico and have a heart of gold," the showboat heroine proclaimed, "than wear a fancy gown which covers a heart of pitch." Showboat plays were dramas of "love, agony, ultimate repentance and redemption" that lived up to their billing as "high class entertainment, which was clean, moral, and refined."

These old riverboat names now are merely echoes along the shore, but the tales they tell of happy or harrowing events, grim reality or high-wide-and-handsome fancy, hard work or minstrelsy and mirth all have found their way out of yesterday's river into the folklore of America.

#### THE CHICAGO FOLKLORE PRIZE

The Chicago Folklore Prize was established by the International Folklore Association and is awarded annually by the University of Chicago for an important contribution to the study of folklore. Students, candidates for higher degrees, and established scholars may compete for the Prize. The contribution may be a monograph, thesis, article, or a collection of materials. No restriction is placed on the contestant's choice of topic or selection of material: the term "folklore" is here used in its broadest sense (e.g., American, European, etc., folklore; anthropological, literary, religious, etc., folklore).

It is permissible to submit material which has appeared in print, if such material is submitted within one year from the time of publication. Sufficient postage should be included if the contestant wishes to have his material returned. The successful contestant will be asked to donate his entry, if it is already printed, to the University of Chicago library; if the award goes to an entry submitted in typed form, the author is likewise requested to send a copy to the University of Chicago library if it later appears in published form.

Entries must be submitted before *April 15, 1961* to the *Chairman of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures*, The University of Chicago, 1050 East 59th Street, Chicago 37, Illinois. The Chicago Folklore Prize provides a cash award of about \$50. The recipient's name is published in the Convocation Statement in June.

(see page 95)

BY TRISTRAM P. COFFIN  
*University of Pennsylvania*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

## GATSBY'S FAIRY LOVER

IN THE SPRING of 1957, *Boston University Studies in English* carried a penetrating article by Richard L. Schoenwald entitled "F. Scott Fitzgerald as John Keats."<sup>1</sup> This study clearly established Fitzgerald's debt to the Englishman in matters all the way from vocabulary to overall inspiration. Schoenwald's remarks concentrate heavily on *Tender is the Night*, and he discusses *The Great Gatsby* only in passing. He might well have spent more time on Fitzgerald's masterpiece, for *The Great Gatsby* contains an odd mixture of the old Celtic fairy story that forms the basis of Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and a *Märchen* that is classified as Aarne-Thompson 561. That Fitzgerald knew *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* intimately is evident not only from Schoenwald's article, but also from the reference to it in

both *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and the Damned*.<sup>2</sup> That he also knew the *Märchen* can be assumed without great risk, as Mt. 561 has had wide circulation in its "Aladdin" form to which most children and a good many adults are continually exposed.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, one thing is clear, Fitzgerald had both in his mind, if only sub-consciously, when he composed the tale of the boy from North Dakota and his "golden girl."

Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* is an idealistic development of the old ballad of Thomas Rymer, itself a re-telling of one of the adventures of Thomas of Erceldoune.<sup>4</sup> The tale that lies behind the folksong, and ultimately behind Keats' poem, is that of the Fairy Queen who seduces a mortal away from earth. Although Keats changes the temper of the narrative from country to court and although he idealizes the whole affair—emphasizing the irresistible charm of the woman, the passion of the love, and the loneliness of the lover—he retains the essential relationship of the tale, that of the normal man who longs for the unattainable girl.

The parallel to Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan is immediately obvious. We are introduced to Gatsby as he stands "alone and palely loitering." Through flashbacks we learn the story of the poor boy and his "faery's child," how she lured him, told him she loved him true, and left him. In fact, so closely does the outline of the novel follow the outline of the poem, it is amazing no one has noticed the parallel before.

The Celtic Fairy Queen, of whom Keats makes use, is truly a "full beautiful creature." Her dress is grass-green or white; she rides a belled horse, usually white; she has flowing hair, scented, and sometimes decorated with apple-blossoms. It is no wonder Thomas of Erceldoune once mistook her for the Queen of Heaven. Keats is not specific in his description of his fairy, except to say "her hair was long, her foot was light, and her eyes were wild." But Fitzgerald is quite specific in his treatment of Daisy. Though the symbol for her presence is a green light,<sup>5</sup> she dresses in white. When we first meet her with Jordan Baker, the two girls are presented through the sensitive eyes of Nick Carraway as being capable of suspension and even flight, until the earthy Tom Buchanan drops them symbolically to the floor.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the

whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.<sup>6</sup>

Daisy, whose maiden name is Fay (an older word for fairy)<sup>7</sup> continues to be associated with white throughout the book. Jordan Baker recalls her in Louisville "dressed in white" and driving a "little white roadster".<sup>8</sup> She wears white on the day of the accident.<sup>9</sup>

White is, to be sure, the color of purity, of the Virgin, and of the bride-to-be. As Fitzgerald uses it, it has a good deal of irony associated with it. It is not without irony as one color of the Celtic Fairy Queen either. The Celtic Fairy is a creature with Satanic connections; some legends even described such beings as the angels who fell in the Revolt from Awe. Daisy, too, has her Satanic side. At least within the framework of her society she is considered fast. Jordan remembers that "wild rumors were circulating about her"<sup>10</sup> and Gatsby was excited by the fact "that many men had already loved"<sup>11</sup> her. Yet, her reputation only serves to increase her charm in an echoing and nostalgic way.

Her voice is particularly haunting. Keats describes the "belle dame" as making "sweet moan" and singing "a faery's song." Fitzgerald gives more detail.

It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget; a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay exciting things hovering in the next hour.<sup>12</sup>

Carraway thinks of the voice as "indiscreet," though that isn't really the word he wants. Gatsby is the one who pin-points it.

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I remarked. "It's full of—" I hesitated.

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it—High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Daisy shares the indiscretion and magic that Gatsby and others (including Fitzgerald himself) have long associated with wealth. She does what she wants, she is care-less, and she promises what money can bring. Gatsby's love for her is mixture of desire for a woman and fascination for moving beyond himself.

Socially, Daisy is beyond Gatsby, who even in his youth carried out programs of self-betterment, as far beyond him as any fairy is beyond any mortal. With his "romantic readiness"<sup>14</sup> he turns her into a dream—"the latest dream he ever did dream"—but it is of no more avail than the knight's dream of his fairy love. Out of "the foul dust" of modern America that floats in the wake of such hopes, Fitzgerald develops the tragedy of the book. Gatsby is left where the sedge has withered—frustrated, alone—having "paid a high price for living too long with a single dream."<sup>15</sup>

He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. . .<sup>16</sup>

He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.<sup>17</sup>

The knight's frustration rises, of course, from the fact he is mortal and the fairy is not. The frustration of Gatsby is not dissimilar, though things may seem in reverse at first glance. Gatsby is frustrated not because he is mortal, but because the real Daisy is not supernatural—because she cannot un-live five years, because she reacts practically to the death of Myrtle Wilson. However, this real Daisy is but remotely connected with the Daisy that Gatsby loves. He believes in a supernatural girl who can un-live the past, who is capable of the same "intensity" that he is capable of.

Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way.<sup>18</sup>

It is this creation of Gatsby's hope that deceives him and goes from him, beyond, as it were, the mists of actuality. The real Daisy, a person playing a tired, pointless game, is a member of a "secret society"<sup>19</sup> of the born rich. As Gatsby is not of the group, she looks at him "as she did love" and "makes sweet moan." But she renounces him during the War for a member of her own group, and she does it again over a "plate of cold fried chicken . . . and two bottles of ale"<sup>20</sup>—sans merci.



The relationship of the Aladdin story to *The Great Gatsby* enters at this point. Gatsby's view of life is *Märchen*-like, and Daisy is the heroine of the particular *Märchen* that he lives. Oddly, the *Märchen* that Gatsby creates to replace reality is a variant of a widespread tale, typed by Aarne and Thompson as Mt. 561 and commonly known in its Aladdin version. Like all *Märchen*, Mt. 561 has no rigid form. However, there is a general pattern that is consistently followed.

- I. The hero finds a magic object which will perform all the wishes of the owner.
- II. By means of the object he builds a magic castle and marries the king's daughter.
- III. The magic object is stolen by a third person who wants to possess the wife. The castle and the wife are transported to a distant island.
- IV. The hero recovers the object with the help of a second magic object which transports the hero to the island. The castle and the princess are restored.

Now no scholar would be bold enough to claim that Fitzgerald consciously conceived of Gatsby's dream in terms of a formal *Märchen*, but that he thought of Gatsby's dream as a sort of fairy-tale version of life is obvious. Garraway's flash of understanding comes when he realizes Gatsby thinks of Daisy as the king's daughter, the golden girl living high in a white palace.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, if we reconstruct what Gatsby expects the story of his affair with Daisy to be, and set it up as a *Märchen*, a folklorist would classify it as a distant variant of Mt. 561. It would go like this:

- I. "High in a white palace" the hero meets "the king's daughter, the golden girl."
- II. He possesses a magic with which to win this princess—the fact that he is different from the others she has known, that he seems to know a lot because he knows different things from her.<sup>22</sup> "One still October night" he takes the girl because he has no real right to touch her hand. To his lower middle-class midwestern mind, he has married her because she is a "nice" girl.<sup>23</sup> She will be his forever and a day as soon as he builds her a castle such as princesses inhabit. She will wait.
- III. The third person possesses the wife before the hero can build her the needed castle. This man is an ogre, and the princess longs to be free of him.
- IV. Five years elapse. The hero has obtained a new magic object, money. He is now able to build the castle. He goes to where she has been taken in order to rescue her. His original magic, his difference from her usual acquaintances, and the old love work

again. The ogre attempts to destroy this magic, but he fails. Love is too strong; the hero and the heroine live happily ever after—having completely forgotten the events of the intervening years.

All of the major motifs of Mt. 561 are present here. The order is somewhat different from the model form of the tale, but that is not unusual among *Märchen*. The only new element added is the ability of the hero and the heroine to eradicate the five unhappy years. Some readers may feel that Gatsby's "difference" is not a magic power, but a careful reading of the novel does show this to be the charm through which he originally wins Daisy and that it still attracts her five years later. There is also the point that Tom does not actually steal this magic when he first "possesses the wife," but he certainly destroys it in the hotel in New York just before the accident.<sup>24</sup>

Fitzgerald is no fool. *The Great Gatsby* tells, in a way, the story of the author's own dreams about Ginerva King and Zelda Sayre. That Fitzgerald wished his own life to be a *Märchen*, with Zelda as the princess and money as the magic objects, in no way prevented his seeing that a love affair similar to his own could not work as fairy tales might and that money has its limits as far as magic goes. In the novel he sees to it that Gatsby's *Märchen* ends wrong. Daisy's little girl by Tom makes it clear that five years cannot be erased; unhappy fate in the form of the auto accident crushes the hero's hopes; the princess forgets her lover and lets the ogre "save her neck"; and the hero breaks "like glass" against the "hard malice" of the villain.<sup>25</sup>

So it is that the Daisy of Gatsby's *Märchen* disillusion him because he is forced to deal with her as a real woman and not as a golden girl. He learns as "the knight-at-arms" learned before him, that life is unsentimental, that "belles dames" are "san merci," and that an America of social and moral traditions is no setting for a *Märchen*. There is much more to the story than this, of course. There is the contrast of midwestern moralism and Eastern insouciance; there is the denunciation of American materialism; there is the obvious religious overtone of the novel in which the man whose mind romped "like the mind of God" finds "what a grotesque thing a rose is." Any study of the book as a whole must treat these points. Nevertheless, the center of the novel is the love affair, and the critic or teacher who can bring a knowledge of the Celtic fairy tale and the old *Märchen* to bear on the book is going to reveal a more poignant and richer *The Great Gatsby* than the one who cannot.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Richard L. Schoenwald, "F. Scott Fitzgerald as John Keats", *Boston University Studies in English*, III (1957), pp. 12-21. The footnotes to this article contain a number of references to Fitzgerald's interest in Keats.

<sup>2</sup> *This Side of Paradise* (New York, 1920), p. 45; *The Beautiful and the Damned*, III (New York, 1922), 8. In *The Beautiful and the Damned* Anthony's girl, Dorothy Raycroft, is called "la belle dame sans merci who lived in his heart."

<sup>3</sup> See Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*, Folklore Fellows Communications 74 (Helsinki 1928) where Mt. 561 is entitled "Aladdin" and is considered to be closely related to Mt. 560, "The Magic Ring."

<sup>4</sup> The revised 1820 text of Keats' poem is used for this article. All quotations come from this version. The ballad "Thomas Rymer" is number 37 in Francis J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols., (Boston and New York, 1882-98). Thomas of Erceldoune, who was frequently referred to as Thomas the Rymer, had an established reputation as a prophet and poet by 1350. Just when he lived is not known, but it was probably in the 13th Century. His prophetic power supposedly came as a gift from the Queen of the Elves.

<sup>5</sup> It would be stretching things a bit to imply that the green of the light at the end of Daisy's dock is related to the green of the Celtic Fairy. Green, which is a lucky color for the Irish, was unlucky in Scotland where Thomas of Erceldoune lived. It certainly is an unlucky color as it applies to Daisy, but that fact does not jibe with Fitzgerald's Irish background. Green, as it concerns Daisy, probably means no more than it does at any crossroads. However, it is interesting to note that the green of the fairies probably derives from their being associated with older vegetation rites. Fitzgerald uses green as a symbol of fertility and promise, and yellow as a color of sterility and despair throughout the novel.

<sup>6</sup> F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Scribner's Student's Edition, 1925 and 1953), p. 8. All other quotations from *The Great Gatsby* are from this edition.

<sup>7</sup> Fitzgerald evidently had Father Fay's name in mind when he gave Daisy her maiden name. On p. 53, Jordan Baker refers to her aunt, Mrs. Sigourney Howard. Sigourney was Cyril Fay's middle name. The fact that Fay also means fairy may be just a coincidence; if so, it is a happy one.

<sup>8</sup> *The Great Gatsby*, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

C. E. SCHORER  
*Detroit, Michigan*

INDIAN TALES OF  
C. C. TROWBRIDGE:  
THE RED HEAD

**T**HE FOLLOWING TALE is the eighth of eleven collected by C. C. Trowbridge in Detroit during the third decade of the nineteenth century; later, he deposited them in the Wisconsin Historical Library, as described in a previous publication.<sup>1</sup> This one attracts attention by certain unusual features which are partly reflected by the pencilled notation (not in Trowbridge's hand) on the manuscript, "Not fit." The general plan of the tale is a loathsome woman's conquest of a beautiful but evasive man. It falls into two parts: first, having sexual contact with him; secondly enticing him to desire the company of herself and their son, and then evading him.

It resembles six other tales in this collection in dealing with the contest of a person for a mate, or for a mate once known and lost.

The resemblance is especially great to the eleventh tale, where a man's wife also evades him by an aerial flight and where he subsequently is turned into a bird. Another point of resemblance is the retaliatory execution of justice. Reversing the position of a tyrannical, harmful, beautiful or ugly person occurs in *all* these tales. "Thrown-Away," for example, is the fifth tale in Trowbridge's collection; it deals with an abandoned son's pursuit and dethroning of his father. Particular resemblance is found in the resort to magical techniques in the contest, or in the execution of justice. Commonly (in all but two tales) an ugly person becomes beautiful, or a human being is transformed to a sub-human form of life.

A striking feature of the story, the hero's red hair, can be found in other Indian tales outside Trowbridge's collection. Among the variants of "The Star Husband" recorded by Thompson, one version portrays the younger and more beautiful husband as red-headed.<sup>2</sup> "The Princess Who Rejected Her Cousin" is a Tsimshian tale of a prince who, after painful mutilation for a scornful woman's favor, regains beauty in the form of red hair and then scorns the woman who humiliated him.<sup>3</sup> Red hair also figures as a portent of the terrible. It is said to signify death in "The Sun Tests His Son-In-Law."<sup>4</sup> In a story collected by Schoolcraft, under the same title, the red head is a magician and tyrant over a tribe until overcome by a boy masking as a girl.<sup>5</sup>

A disfiguring skin disease, such as the heroine's itch in this tale, is found in other North American Indian tales like "The Dirty Boy," where a hero has sore eyes and a scabby face but is transformed through magic so that stars appear on his body.<sup>6</sup> The itch, specifically, is accounted for in the lore of India as a device created by a cruel god to cause a man's self-destruction.<sup>7</sup> The general idea of a loathsome or lowly woman gaining the favor of a superior prince—the "Cinderella" theme—occurs in Indian tales of heroines with skin sores or leprosy, and in a more general sense, in "The Piqued Buffalo Wife," which represents the woman as a buffalo cow.<sup>8</sup> The hero often gives an initial unpleasant impression in stories such as Schoolcraft's "Osseo," where he is an old man until magically transformed to a beautiful man by the Evening Star, his father.<sup>9</sup>

Urine as the medium for the creation of life is found in an Argentine tale of a bachelor, who makes a child from his urine.<sup>10</sup> In a story of India, the first humans are said to have originated from two drops of urine.<sup>11</sup> Urine is used to decide paternity in several North American tales.<sup>12</sup> Other unusual conceptions—by a long

penis,<sup>13</sup> from the ground,<sup>14</sup> and from a blood clot<sup>15</sup>—are also common. Thus the tale under consideration shows certain resemblances, albeit remote, to other folklore accounts of conception.

Several additional minor points of resemblance to other Indian tales may be mentioned. The father who tries to kill his wife and child is found in the Indian story, "The Jealous Father," where the father's defeat by his son is followed by conversion of the mother and son into a robin and a Canada jay. The resemblance of the two tales in this instance includes the conversion of a human to a jay, as well as the defeat of the father.<sup>16</sup> The jay often figures in Indian tales, of course, usually as a trickster and as a hero.<sup>17</sup> The explanation of the origin of various creatures and their markings occurs as part of much Indian legendry, such as the account of the helldiver's red eyes or the buzzard's bald head.<sup>18</sup> A fairly common ending to a pursuit story is the conversion of a male pursuer to a bird or a fish.<sup>19</sup> Spittle turning to gold appears in "The True Bride" and resembles the wampum production in the tale about to be reported.<sup>20</sup>

This tale stands apart from the others in the Trowbridge series by its boldness. The frank depiction of the trick sexual act, and the presentation of the competitive attitude among tribal women toward getting a prized male strike one as unusual. This tale also gives a much more vivid picture of family structure than other tales recorded by Trowbridge; it displays both the rigidity of the hierarchy, with the father as center of the structure, and also the strong attitude toward the marital responsibility of the male.

For a man to avoid a woman, moreover, is an unusual feature throughout folklore. Even the Cinderella story has not the unique sense of a male shunning a girl which distinguishes this tale. The peculiar use of a cane tube for copulation has no exact duplicate in folklore, to my knowledge. A final original feature, in spite of comment within the story on its fame, is the bird transporting the mother and child in low sweeps over the earth and out to sea. Ingenuity as well as familiarity, therefore, give this tale the excitement of an adventure story.

#### MESKWAUNKWAATAR. THE RED HEAD

*Kautaupee. There was a large town, whose chief<sup>21</sup> had a wife, a son and four daughters.<sup>22</sup> The chief<sup>23</sup> himself and each of these relatives, had red hair. The son of this Chief (who was the youngest child)<sup>24</sup> was a paragon of beauty. In those days the Indians erected a kind of scaffold in the wigwam, and this young man never suffered*

himself to be seen, except by his own family<sup>25</sup> but kept secreted upon this scaffold. The young maidens of the village had a strong curiosity to see him, which was increased by his efforts to prevent the gratification of their wishes. They often went to the wigwam in considerable numbers and begged the intervention of the mother's authority. But the young man would not be entreated or commanded, tho' in all other things he was a pattern of obedience. It was customary for the young females when they had been foiled in an attempt to see this youth, to withdraw to the house of a poor woman who lived at some distance and who was sorely afflicted with a hereditary complaint like the itch. They called her OamaakOakwaa or Itch woman. Their object in visiting her was to obtain a little amusement after their defeat, and this consisted in teasing her. "Why don't you go and try to see this young man" said they. "He will not see us but perhaps he may exhibit himself to you."

The sisters of this young man were desirous that he should suffer himself to be seen by the young women and that he should form a matrimonial connection with one of them. The eldest sister went up to his scaffold one day and said to him. "Brother, now you have grown up, and are of a proper age to marry, and I have come to talk with you. Your other sisters & myself are anxious that you should get a wife among these pretty girls who come daily to visit you. We are very lonely, because you never associate with us, and we should be happy if you would get a wife, so that we might have a brother and a sister in law to live with us." The young man did not answer his sister, and she descended. After this the young females, began to come singly, and at each visit this elder sister would go up to the young man & tell him that a young woman, naming her, had come to see him, and was in love with him. But he always answered "You had better drive her away," and the sister was obliged to retire. At length the time arrived when each of the young women of the village had made the attempt and had been driven away. They met one day by common consent to relate to each other the event of their visit, and finding that every one had been treated like the others, they began to despair. "But said one, we have been unsuccessful, and now let us go to Oamaak-Oakwaa. We are young and handsome, She is ugly and diseased. But never mind that. We will persuade her to go and try her fortune, and we will have some fun out of it." So they went to the house of Oamaakoakwaa. Well said one to her, we have all been defeated in our attempts to see young Meskwaunkwaatar (Red Head) and we think that you may be successful if you should try. Oh no, said the other, if you who are so young and beautiful

have been rejected, how certain shall I be to meet the same fate. But, returned the girl, nothing is effected without some exertion. You can but make the attempt, and if you fail, you will not be the only one."

In the night, after the departure of her visitors, OamaakOakwaa thought she would gratify her desire to see the young fellow at least, tho' she could not hope for his affection.

As the young man never descended from his scaffold unless when he could do it undiscovered, he kept a long piece of cane, extending from the scaffold almost to the ground, for certain nameless use. Under this cane OamaakOakwaa reposed herself, and in the night she heard a noise. It was Meskwaunkwaatar, who was about to urinate. She placed herself exactly under the Cane—and when he had done, "Now said she I know him, and I will go home."—In the morning the young women met, and proceeded to the wigwam of the Itch woman, to learn how she had succeeded. "Well said they did you go to try your fortune last night? My friends, replied OamaakOakwaa, you have kept me for a long time as the butt of your wit, and my infirmities and disease, so far from exciting your pity, have only been a source of amusement to you. I neither went to the young man's house, nor do I desire to go, for I am certain that his sisters would start at sight of me, and would drive me away. In mercy to me, do not speak on this subject again, for I have been a laughing stock for you long enough." The young women touched with pity engaged not to tease her any more.

Some time after this OamaakOakwaa discovered that she was pregnant. "Aha! said she to herself, now these young tormentors will have a new subject to tease me about. They will ask me who will be the father of my child. I certainly will be ashamed to confess that I slept under the reed, and I therefore must only acknowledge that a man will be his father."

One day, one of the young women resolved to go and see OamaakOakwaa, and when she arrived there she discovered the change in her appearance. She said nothing until her return when she acquainted her young friend with the fact. The next day they all went to pay a visit. "Why how you have grown said one to her, What is the reason of this? You are certainly very fleshy." Oh said another I can guess the reason. You will have a little one, will you not? Perhaps so, replied the other. By whom? said the first. By a man of course answered OamaakOakwaa. What man? That you are not to know now, said she, but when the child is born I will inform



you. Until that time let me rest in peace, for no endeavours of yours will be able to attain your present object. The visitors departed and some time after they went again to see the Itch woman. Why said they you have grown small since we saw you before. Have you had a child? Yes, some months since. Where is he?—Dead. Where buried? In the woods. How did he look? Exactly like his father. Are you grieved for the loss of the child? Sincerely grieved.—After offering some consolation to the mother the young women departed. In a short time they repeated their visit, and they found Oamaak-Oakwaa employed in husking corn. Why said they, are your breasts so large? Certainly you must have deceived us about the death of your child or you would not now bear so much the appearance of a nurse. No said the other, tho' it is unaccountable, my breasts have been full of milk ever since his death. Entertaining strong suspicions, the young women resolved to withdraw and hide themselves for the purpose of watching. They did so, and soon after they had gone the mother arose & having looked around her to see that no one was near, she removed some corn leaves from the body of her infant who lay hid, and took him up. At this the young females rushed suddenly upon her and reproached her with her deception. They saw that the child had red hair & knew he must be the issue of the father or son of the family of red heads. They demanded of the mother whether the young man who kept himself invisible was the father, & she answered in the affirmative. Astonished at what they saw they proceeded to the house of this young man and related to the sisters the circumstances of their visit. These communicated the information to their parents, who dispatched the eldest to see if the news were true. She returned with a confirmation of the report, and they sent her then to bring the mother to live with them. Oamaak-Oakwaa sat out & the sister carried the child. Upon approaching the house she ran with it to her sisters & then to her father & mother. They were convinced, and they embraced the child and its mother with affection. Then the Elder sister took the child in her arms and went up to see her brother. "Look here said she. I have a little nephew. Do you know him?" "Know him! No." "Why," replied she, "he is certainly your child. Every feature in your face is copied in his." "He is not mine" said the young man. "Take him away." "You have been imposed upon. I now recollect the circumstances of having used the reed, without hearing the usual noise." "Take him away, I say." She descended, and having told her sisters the result of her interviews, they wept profusely. At

length they advised their sister to try once more and if their brother did not acknowledge the child they would adopt it and raise it. So she returned and entreated her brother to confess the fact, for that his sisters had determined to keep the child if he rejected it. "The child is not mine said he and I repeat to you, send it away, and send away too his guilty mother. For my part I am so grieved at this circumstance that I am determined to leave my father's house and never be seen here again." The young woman related to the mother of the child what she had heard, and OamaakOakwaa departed with a sorrowful heart. Ah my dear infant said she, your father has determined to leave us, but we will follow him closely.

On the following day the young man prepared his pack and set out toward the east, but discovering soon that the object of his hate lived in that direction he turned about & proceeded westward. As soon as OamaakOakwaa heard of his departure she took her infant and followed him. In the evening he encamped and not long after his encampment, OamaakOakwaa came up. What do you here said he? Can not I get rid of you in any way? Alas! no, Meskwaunkwaatar, said she, your little child cried so much at your departure that I was compelled to follow you. Well replied he, you will not have that excuse again. At this he struck them on the head with his tomahawk and killed them. In the morning he rose and left his encampment, in high spirits. About an hour after his departure OamaakOakwaa and her little boy came to life, and was surprised to see that she had not any appearance of the disease which had troubled her so much but that she was fair & beautiful, and that her little child had grown very much. She thought this a precursor of good fortune & having dressed herself and boy very neatly she proceeded in quest of his father. At night she arrived at his camp. "Are you here again said he, to trouble me." How can it be otherwise answered OamaakOakwaa, your boy looked so sweetly when I awoke in the morning that I thought his tears might now have some effect upon your hard heart. To convince you that they have not, said he, take that; and he struck her again with his tomahawk & killed her. Some time after he killed the boy, and putting the bodies together he built a large fire and burned them. In the morning he was pleased to see that all was burned except a few bones. He thought he had taken a course which could not fail to rid him of his troubles. But after he had been gone some time the mother & her son rose like a phoenix from the ashes; more beautiful than ever. OamaakOakwaa combed the boy's beautiful long hair & having washed herself she



commenced the pursuit. Now she she [sic] to her son, your father will reach a village today and there he will marry two wives. As we pass that village it will be necessary for you to present some wampum to your grandfathers and also some pigeons for a feast of soup. Presently OamaakOakwaa called upon Metholetshaakee (a large bird famed in fabulous history); and they spread their blankets upon his back got upon him<sup>28</sup> and continued their route. When the bird had risen into the air, the mother said to the son that she would begin to sing as soon as they arrived at the village, and that they would pass directly by the wigwam in which his father would be. When they arrived there they would not soar in the air but would go near the earth that they might be seen, and when directly opposite the wigwam of his father, he must spit upon the ground, and his spittle would drop down in wampum. Then he must blow with his breath four times, and flocks of pigeons would fall for his grandfather in the village.

Meskwaunkwaatar made the best of his way to the village, where he married two wives as OamaakOakwaa had predicted. He was seated between them and they were employed in combing his long beautiful hair, which was parted and divided to their hands, when OamaakOakwaa & her son arrived on the back of Metholetshaakee.

She commenced her song

Meskwaunkwaatar	Red head—
Meskwaunkwaatar	Red head
Meskwaunkwaatar	Red head—
Nau wau tshee,	He is going to
au poa shee waa	a present
tar koa lee—	give—
Meskwaunkwaatar,	Red head,
Meskwaunkwaatar,	Red head,
Naw wau tshee	He is going to
Au poa shee waa,	a Present
tarkoalee—,	give—
Meskwaunkwaatar,	Red head
Meskwaunkwaatar,	Red head

Meskwaunkwaatar heard the singing, and told his wives to stop, for somebody called him, but they saw he was mistaken, and kept hold of his hair, fearing to have him go. He listened again & the singer approached. Certain that he was called he pushed his wives away & rushed out of the wigwam. He saw OamaakOakwaa & her son

passing along just far enough from the earth to admit of his reaching the feathers of the bird. He ran to meet them—"Oh my dear wife & my dear son, how glad I am to see you; I knew you were coming—Oh my dear wife, permit me to take my son and talk to him." But they passed on without heeding him and when arrived at the middle of the village the boy spit to the ground, & the earth was covered with wampum for some distance around; the villagers scrambled about to collect it, and in a short time they saw large flocks of pigeons flying close to them, and they sat themselves about killing them with clubs.

Then the travellers changed their song, repeating

Meskwaunkwaatar, (as before 3 or four times)

Meshau (Implying past tense)

Aupoasheewaa a Present

Tarkoalee given

All this time Meskwaunkwaatar was following the mother & her son & entreating them to stop a moment, only one moment, to speak to him. But they did not regard him. The woman proceeded, singing, "When Meskwaunkwaatar left his village he said he would not come back." No my dear wife said he I only came to make a visit. Do stop for me—But she continued on, & at length arrived at a large lake. Her bird flew across & Meskwaunkwaatar turned into a Bluejay & followed her. She sunk in the middle of the lake with her little son, & turned into a shell. Meskwaunkwaatar, turned back at this and with the greatest difficulty reached the shore whence he started. There he remained, looking at the lake, and weeping. At length he concluded to have a dance, and he danced some time and then flew away into the air. The tears of Meskwaunkwaatar are still to be seen under the eyes of the Blue jay, in little black marks. —End.<sup>20</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Indian Tales of C. C. Trowbridge: The Toadstool Man," *MF*, IX (Fall, 1959), 139-145.

<sup>2</sup> Stith Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians* (Cambridge, 1929), p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> H. R. Schoolcraft, *The Myth of Hiawatha* (Philadelphia, 1856), p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> Verrier Elwin, *Myths of Middle India* (Bombay, 1949), p. 171.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 327, 150.

<sup>9</sup> Schoolcraft, *The Myth of Hiawatha*, p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Mettraux, "Myths of the Toba and Pilaga Indians of the Gran Chaco," *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society*, XL (1946), 132.

- <sup>11</sup> Stith Thompson, *Oral Tales of India* (Bloomington, Ind., 1958), p. 23.  
<sup>12</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 140.  
<sup>13</sup> Truman Michelson, Notes on Peoria Folk Lore and Mythology," JAF, XXX (1917), 494.  
<sup>14</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 97.  
<sup>15</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 108.  
<sup>16</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 116.  
<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 93; Franz Boas, "Tsimshian Mythology," *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, XXXI (1916), 646.  
<sup>18</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, pp. 54, 57.  
<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, pp. 154, 160.  
<sup>20</sup> Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians*, p. 231.  
<sup>21</sup> Trowbridge first wrote "King," and then lined this word through and substituted "chief."  
<sup>22</sup> "Sisters" has been struck out and replaced by "daughters."  
<sup>23</sup> "Chief" replaces "King" as above.  
<sup>24</sup> This parenthetical clause was inserted above the line.  
<sup>25</sup> This phrase was inserted above the line.  
<sup>26</sup> "Almost" is inserted above the line.  
<sup>27</sup> Here the manuscript contains the two words "in which," which are lined through.  
<sup>28</sup> The phrase "got upon him" is inserted above the line.  
<sup>29</sup> On the back of the last page Trowbridge wrote "Meskwaunkwaatar 8." Someone else has written, in pencil, below this, "Not fit."

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures is pleased to announce that the Chicago Folklore Prize has been awarded in 1960 to:

Professor Charles W. Dunn  
 Department of English  
 New York University  
 Washington Square 3, N.Y.

for his book

*The Foundling and the Werwolf*

Toronto: University of Toronto Press,  
 1960

By ROGER D. ABRAHAMS  
*University of Pennsylvania*

FOLKLORE ON  
RECORDS: JEAN  
RITCHIE, FOLKSINGER  
IN A COMMERCIAL  
MEDIUM

THE ISSUANCE of Tradition's new Jean Ritchie record underlines the problems which confront this unique performer. Entitled *Carols of All Seasons* (TLP 1031), the disc contains seventeen carols performed by Miss Ritchie. She is accompanied, on over half of them, by two sensitive musicians, Robert Abramson (harpsichord) and LaNoue Davenport (recorder). As Miss Ritchie is herself quite sensitive musically, this album should be a delight. Unfortunately, in many respects it is not, and the reasons for this call for a discussion that goes beyond a consideration of this record alone.

Folk song, as anyone who has recently turned on his radio knows, is becoming the source of inspiration for more and more popular songs. Not only have many folksongs been rewritten and made into

best-selling records, but one group of folksingers, The Kingston Trio is one of the most popular musical organizations in show business today. This utilization of folk material has brought a new era of respectability to the folk singer, and has provided him with an opportunity of making a living from traditional song in one way or another.

It is unfortunate that part of this growing popular interest does not extend to a greater reception for traditional type performances. Jean Ritchie is unique in that she is a living representative of a fine singing family, and one who sings in a fine young firm voice, yet in traditional style. When she sings unaccompanied or with her dulcimer the result is so remarkably simple that its beauty is occasionally overwhelming. In conjunction with the rise of interest in traditional song, one would think that a greater market would exist for her records. But this evidently is not the fact of the matter, for as the record under consideration indicates, and as a brief run-through of her previous records will show, the public does not seem disposed to want unadulterated Ritchie.

Jean Ritchie has made the following records:

- Shivaree* (with Oscar Brand, Tom Paley, Harry and Jeanie West, Esoteric 538)
- Jean Ritchie Sings* (10" Elektra, EKLP-2) o.p.
- Kentucky Mountain Songs* (10" Elektra, EKLP-25) o.p.
- Jean Ritchie* (Elektra, reissue of the above two on one twelve inch disc, EKLP 125)
- Saturday Night and Sunday Too* (Riverside RLP 12-620)
- Riddle Me This* (with Oscar Brand, Riverside RLP 12-646)
- American Folktales and Songs* (with Paul Clayton and Richard Chase, Tradition TLP 1011)
- Children's Songs and Games from The Southern Appalachian Mountains* (Folkways)
- The Ritchie Family of Kentucky*, (Folkways, FA 2316)
- Songs From Kentucky*, (Westminster, 6037)
- Courtin's a Pleasure*, (with Brand and Paley, Elektra 122)
- Field Trip* (Collectors Limited Editions) (Can only be acquired from the singer)
- Ballads in Colonial America* (10" with Kraker, New Records, NRLP 2005)

She has also made a number of records in England, two 78's for HMV and two 10" LP's for Argo (which I believe are issued in this country on the one Westminster disc.) She has also performed on two records aimed solely at the children's market.

Of these many records, the majority are marked by some attempt or another to water down her effect. *Shivaree* has her singing only

two songs alone. Her efforts in duets with Brand are commendable, but nothing like what she is capable of doing by herself. Brand is a spirited performer, but he has none of her finesse. *Riddle Me This* and *Courtin's a Pleasure* are similarly marred. Several other of her records are devoted completely to her singing, but are marred by injudicious accompaniments provided by other instrumentalists. It is true that in most cases these side musicians are accomplished ones, but they do not seem really to have listened to the songs they were accompanying. This is true of *Saturday Night and Sunday Too* and *Singing Family of the Cumberlands*.

To some extent this latter fault is to be found in the record occasioning this review, *Carols of All Seasons*. This becomes especially evident when in the middle of the record she sings her family's magnificent version of "The Cherry Tree Carol" completely unaccompanied.

Clearly the best of her records remain the ones in which she is given the freest possible rein in order to fully express her singular talents. These would include *Jean Ritchie*, *Children's Games etc.*, and *Songs of Kentucky*.

Part of Miss Ritchie's talents go beyond singing. She is a remarkably vivid writer, and she has given us glimpses into her life both through her records and through two wonderful books, *Singing Family of the Cumberlands*, (Oxford, 1955), and *The Swapping Song Book*, (Oxford, 1952). (A further book, *A Garland of Mountain Songs*, is principally a collection of some of her family songs without much commentary.) The experience recreated in these books is furthered by some of her records. Specifically, some of the chapters from *Singing Family of the Cumberlands* are read and sung on the record of the same name. Further, on her "Ritchie Family of Kentucky" record, she favors us with actual field recordings which she made of her family gathering at Christmas-time.

The experience of being able to share, through Miss Ritchie's artistic expression, the life which she has led, is indeed always a memorable one. Further, it gives to the uninitiated a wonderful introduction to mountain life, indeed, in many ways, life in general. To the folklorist it gives something of a jolt. For here we have a living example of a truly expressive mountain family, which not only has preserved some 300 of the best old songs, but inevitably in full text and with exquisite melodic feeling. Dispelling further folkloristic biases, the Ritchies not only sing the old songs with the single melodic



line, but they also sing many songs which are newer and more sentimental, and often in churchy harmony.

Truly then, we are fortunate to have such an authentic and expressive artist in our midst. It is only to be regretted that the larger buying public, in spite of its growing interest in folksong, is not receptive to her unique talents.

Many other records have recently been issued, several of which should be mentioned only to dissuade the unwary reader from buying them.

*Songs of Robert Burns*, Sung by Ewan MacColl. (Folkways 8758). The way Burns songs should be sung, by an accomplished folksinger-actor-playwright: as if they are being sung in the fields or at a country gathering, both violently introspective and wildly extroverted. MacColl seems to understand and feel these songs, and he gets sensitive, unobtrusive accompaniment.

*Love Songs of Robert Burns*, Sung by Ann Moray. (Spoken Arts 754). The way Burns songs should not be sung. Pious, art-song approach. The singing is competent at best, shrill at worst. The harp accompaniments are a good idea.

*An Informal Hour with J. Frank Dobie*, (Spoken Arts, 722). A wonderful, chatty hour with this past-master of the cracker-barrel approach to folklore and Americana. A very human, warm record containing the stories of "Big Foot Wallace and the Hickory Nuts," "The Mezcla Man," "Sancho-the Longhorned Steer" and "Bears are Intelligent People."

*Australian Folksongs and Ballads*, Sung by John Greenway, (Folkways FW 8718). This is a fine record made by a fine folksinger and increasingly distinguished scholar. Unfortunately, the record begs comparison with the one by the great English folksinger-scholar-collector A. L. Lloyd (*Australian Bush Songs*, Riverside, RLP 12-606) and Greenway is not the singer that Lloyd is.

*Burl Ives, Ballads with Guitar* (United Artists UAL 3060). Ives, a little older, a little slower on the beat, going back to his old style, and much of his older material. He is still one of the best storytellers in song around. Includes "Henry Martyn," "Croodin' Doo," and such songs.

*Germaine Montero, Canciones de Espana*, (Vanguard VRS 9050). A reissue of the old 10" disc which won numerous prizes. The only

thing added seems to have been some flamenco guitar solos by Roman el Granaino. This remains one of the most exciting albums of art-folk-songs ever produced.

*Brendan Behan Sings Irish Folksongs and Ballads*, (Spoken Arts 760). The renowned Irish playwright and revolutionary, as usual deep in his cups, talking to himself and the microphone and occasionally bursting into such old Irish ballads as "Home on the Range" and "The Zoological Gardens". Most of the songs he does get around to singing are ones he wrote himself or are works of the I.R.A.

*Folk Song Festival at Carnegie Hall*, (United Artists UAL 3050). This has all the pitfalls of concert recordings without the usual redeeming factor of spontaneity. Jimmy Driftwood, the Stoney Mountain Boys (a bluegrass band), Memphis Slim, and Muddy Waters go through the motions. All of them are better represented elsewhere. It does make one feel that this sort of cross-cultural concert is a good thing however.

*Irish Ballads, Folksongs and Lyrics Read by Siobhan McKenna*, (Spoken Arts 707). This compelling Irish actress reads poems by Yeats, Joyce, Colum, several translations from the Gaelic, and three folksongs.

*An Evening With John Jacob Niles*, (Tradition TLP 1036). Niles is eternal. This is just one of the many similar pages in his book. Well recorded, a warm record. Begs the usual questions which Niles's records do: how much is folk, how much is Niles?

*Folk Festival at Newport* (three albums sold separately, Vanguard VRS 9062-64). The same representative group of folksingers found at the festival in 1959. This list includes Pete Seeger, Martha Schlamme, Leon Bibb, Tommy Makem, Joan Baez, Barbara Dane, Bob Gibson, Brownie McGhee, The New Lost City Ramblers, Odetta, Mike Seeger, Sonny Terry, Oscar Brand, Jean Ritchie, Cynthia Gooding, Frank Hamilton, Ed McCurdy, John Jacob Niles, Earl Scruggs, and Frank Warner. Obviously not much of each performer. Most of the better material has been recorded before, under better conditions, but the performances are for the most part compelling.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### FOLK SONG

*Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898.* By D. K. Wilgus. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959). Pp. xx + 466. \$7.50.

Students of traditional song will be indebted to D. K. Wilgus for his definitive study of folksong scholarship and criticism in English since the turn of the century. One doesn't have to go farther than the pages of this book to find out what has been occupying the minds of those who have been interested in folksong in English for the last sixty years.

In many ways this book is a continuation of Sigurd Hustvedt's volumes on ballad criticism. It begins where Hustvedt left off; it is, especially in the first part of the book, equally objective. It is more limited in area covered, for Wilgus surveys only criticism in English, but it is broader in that he considers not only ballad scholarship, but all study in the field of folksong. But in many ways this book is more than Hustvedt's are, more than simply a recounting of the scholarship of this century. It is two further things—an adventure, and a critical work.

It is an adventure, in the first part of the book, because it tells the story of the collision of great minds and large ideas, and because Wilgus is able to see adventure in such a conflict. Today, the struggle between the communalists and the individualists is regarded as a ridiculous one, a moot-contest over imaginary rewards. This is because the problems then presented to scholars have long since been settled or discarded as subjects for fruitful inquiry. Yet Wilgus is able to bring a great deal of sympathy to the discussion that was being waged, and thus he is able to present us with more than just the ideas of these men; he gives us their force, their drive, their inspiration. He explains through this method, why the struggle was an important one that occupied some of the finer minds of the time. His descriptions of the theories of Francis Barton Gummere, for instance, not only bring to light that scholar's ideas on the origin of the ballad, but also his extraordinary ability to influence others. Gummere's ideas are described not just in connection with Andrew Lang and the communalist theory, but as a "peculiar union of faith and method by which [he] convinced a generation of literary scholars that the ballad must be studied as a survival of primitive poetry."

In the later sections of the book, the adventure is that of discovery. Wilgus gives a discussion of the collecting activity that went on after it was discovered that folksongs still were being sung. He does not confine himself to the scholar-collectors, or to the amateurs interested in collections of folksongs for their quaintness, but he also gives us a capsule history of the efforts of the early recording industry who went South attempting to record the music of the people of that potential market.

The great adventure underlying the whole book, however, is that the reader is given the feeling that all of this activity was aiming toward one specific end; though the maneuverings of the collectors and the scholars may have appeared haphazard, underneath it all there was a purpose. It is not until we come to the final chapter that we begin to realize that Wilgus as well as the reader feels this way, that he too feels that the study of folksong has been purposive and must continue to advance. The purpose that he sees resembles a dialectic; first there must be collection, then collation or cataloguing, and finally the synthesis, a full, rounded study of folksongs and folksingers.

This points out the real importance of Wilgus's book: a coherent, rational critical approach. When he is discussing the communal-individual controversy he is speaking from a modern point of view, a position which is accepted now by almost everyone; thus he is able to appear to be objective in those chapters. In all of his subsequent discussions, however, work is measured against critical standards which are somewhat more controversial. He often meets possible challenge with words befitting scholarly controversy; his bark and his bite are equally effective.

High on his critical blacklist are those who attempt arbitrarily to delimit what should be studied as ballad or folksong, and what should not. The prime offenders of this critical malfunctioning are those who have separated Child ballads from all others. For this he takes many collectors and editors to task. Significantly, he not only does this to those who have included only Child ballads in their collections, or those who have set them in front of their books, away from the "lesser" songs; he also reprimands John Lomax for making the same mistake by exclusion. Lomax separated, indeed, excluded these older English songs because they are not indigenous to the U.S.

The arbitrary restrictions brought about by the prominence of the work of Child are not the only such distinctions which incur Wilgus's wrath. He takes a number of collectors to task for other

arbitrary restrictions. He dislikes Lomax's attitude of running to isolated areas away from the incursions of the radio, etc. and then labelling his findings as representative of American folksong. In the same way, he disagrees with John Greenway's overrestricted sense of the word "folk" in which all of the poetic capacities of the rural folk (the only people which everyone agrees are deserving of that name) are funnelled to industrial workers. Thus all modern folksong emerges, not only as more limited in duration and provenance, but also as, in the main, songs of protest.

Wilgus develops critical precepts as to how collecting should be done, (material not only on song but also on singer and social environment of song), how cataloguing should proceed (by narrative types with pauses to indicate interrelationships) and how future study should proceed ("The facts of creation, variation, adaptation and recomposition must always be carefully established through a strict methodology. But the student should not stop without a consideration of the method and meaning of the processes").

Against these precepts, he weighs all of the scholarship which has appeared in English since 1898. His decisions are always strongly stated, well-reasoned and, in most cases, considerate. His achievement in this work is considerable. His critical standards will be ones by which we shall judge a scholarly work of folklore in the future.

University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia 4, Pa.

Roger D. Abrahams

*The Ballad of Heer Halewijn: Its Forms and Variations in Western Europe. A Study of the History and Nature of a Ballad Tradition.* By Holger Olof Nygard. (Knoxville, Tennessee: The University of Tennessee Press, 1958). Pp. 350. \$5.50.

The title of this study of Child No. 4 has been deliberately chosen to emphasize that the Flemish ballad represents the original form of the song, and more especially to point up the inappropriateness of the English name of the ballad, "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight." In the section called "The A and B Variants, with Animadversions upon Peter Buchan" (pp. 297-316), Professor Nygard argues convincingly that the texts from which Child unfortunately derived the title of the ballad were in fact forgeries insinuated into scholarly tradition under Buchan's aegis. This assertion is not merely a revival of the "Buchan Question" or belated criticism of Child's title. On the contrary, establishing the inauthenticity of the A and B variants

is essential to Nygard's view of the ballad's route of migration. For he concludes that the Halewijn ballad reached Britain not by way of Scandinavia (a theory based on the notion that variant A was a transitional form between the Scandinavian and Scottish versions), but through France.

Professor Nygard proceeds in his study in an admirably thorough and orderly fashion. He examines the ballad in Continental Germanic tradition, in Scandinavia, France and French Canada, and Great Britain. Each chapter begins with a list of variants. Hardly an unusual approach—except that Nygard disentangles the extremely confused bibliography by clarifying which are distant variants and which are merely reprints from earlier sources (see his incisive criticism of Kemppinen's "long count," p. 19). He then painstakingly analyzes the content of the variants according to some fifteen "stages" or narrative motifs. As promised in his introduction (see pp. 14-15 *et passim*), Nygard is not merely satisfied to enumerate instances. Instead, he attempts to evaluate sources, to avoid confusing what may be a balladmonger's (or even a collector's) emendation with a genuine variation in oral transmission.

Except for ascertaining that the ballad travelled from France to Britain instead of from Scandinavia to Britain to France, as has been supposed, Professor Nygard's conclusions are not especially startling. The study is rather the more convincing because it does not strain the reader's credulity. For example, Nygard accepts the original supernatural character of the knight without going into futile conjecture as to whether he was an elf or rider in the wild host or pagan deity. What he does consider important about the supernatural features of the ballad is that rationalizing them was the probable basis for variation: "It is my hypothesis, then, that ballad singers were forced to alter the narrative and its sequence of events as they lost a sense of the supernatural import of the story" (p. 320). As supported by the careful marshalling of evidence, Nygard's hypothesis seems to me eminently reasonable. On the whole, his study of Child No. 4, if not definitive, must be considered at least for our generation the standard work on this ballad.

There are many fine scholarly works done every year, however, which are merely "fine scholarly works." By that I mean studies that by reason of their limited scope must be reverentially set aside with other "definitive" but often tedious volumes to be used in the indefinite future by some other researcher interested in that oddment of human science. If Nygard's book were of that sort, it would be



sufficient to order it for the college library, to peruse it on arrival (if only to check up on the reviewers), and then to dismiss it with a bibliographical note "for future reference." But Nygard's study has immediate and general usefulness—especially in the teaching of folklore. After all, "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight"—if indeed we can continue to use that misnomer for Child No. 4—is, or certainly ought to be, discussed in any introductory folklore course. And now that Nygard's study is available, it would be downright unconscionable to ignore it in class discussion of the ballad.

*The Ballad of Heer Halewijn*, then, should be required reading for all teachers of folklore, and it is incumbent upon them to convey the material of this study to their students. I do not think, however, that undergraduates should be required to read the book. It is not intended for them; it presupposes an acquaintance with technical matters beyond the ken of the average undergraduate. Nor should Nygard's study be relegated to a probably already overlong "list of suggested readings." It is vital that the results of this excellent piece of folklore scholarship (and indeed others as well) be presented and expounded in folklore classes—if folklore is to be in fact a "respectable" subject in the college curriculum.

*The Ballad of Heer Halewijn* by Holger Nygard is a scholarly work of the first order: not only is it an essential addition to the bibliography of standard folklore studies, but it is also, if not more importantly, a basic contribution to the knowledge of folklore which should be imparted in the classroom.

University of Rhode Island  
Kingston, Rhode Island

Barbara Allen Woods

*The Play-Party in Indiana*. By Leah Jackson Wolford. Edited and Revised by W. Edson Richmond and William Tillson. Illustrated by Nancy Gilbert. (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Historical Society, 1959). 103-326 pp. \$3.00.

This volume was first published in 1917, was out of print a year later, reprinted in 1938, and was again out of print in ten years. Long sought by all students of folksong and play-party, it has now been made available again.

In this reissue the editors have wisely altered the original text as little as possible. Consequently, much of the delightful naive charm has been retained. Mrs. Wolford's description of the conditions under which people used the play-party material, and the actual play-party itself remains an engaging as any other discussion on the subject.

But the editors have also wisely called upon scholarly information which has become available since the earlier issues, and have enriched Mrs. Wolford's introduction with additional notes on Indiana background and on the songs themselves. Especially useful for the former is the manuscript "A Hoosier Heritage," which has been edited by one of the editors of this text. In broadening the notes to the individual pieces, the editors admittedly were not comprehensive, using mainly an unpublished Indiana Univ. M.A. thesis, "Brown County Songs and Ballads"; the list by Altha Lea McLendon "A Finding List of Play-Party Games," in *SFQ*, VIII (1944); Botkin's *The American Play-Party Song*; and the *Brown Collection*. But with these indexes they have indicated variants and discussions.

The editors are able to correct the few errors which, from want of information, crept into the original text. With "Buffalo Gals," for example, Mrs. Wolford had originally stated that it was a local song, concluding from her local title, "Cincinnati Girls." Now it has been correctly demonstrated, as everyone knows, that as early as 1844, Cool White (real name John Hodges) copyrighted the song "Lubly Fan," which may have been original with him and may have been lifted from oral tradition. Regardless, the name was changed to fit almost any and every city in the country, and the song was disseminated by scores of minstrel renditions, and thus became anything but a "local" piece.

"Polly, Put the Kettle On," to example another "correction" of Mrs. Wolford's text, is primarily a nursery song; it was included originally as a play-party song, though the author did not know it as such herself. The full history of this piece in America is indeed not yet known. It was apparently well known by the time of the Revolution, judging by its being used as a tune to numerous publications of a piece called "Gunpowder Tea," which, as the title and setting indicate, was a strong brew concocted for the invading Britishers, who "must have their tea."

This reissue is much superior to the original. Three heads, and nearly half a century of scholarship and hindsight, are still better than one. For making it available again, the Society and the Editors are to be thanked. For the general folklorist, as well as the scholar, there should perhaps be needed only a note, to get a copy before, as has happened twice in the past, this edition goes out of print.

University of Maryland  
College Park, Maryland

Ray B. Browne

*Folk Sing: A Handbook for Pickers and Singers.* Edited by Herbert Haufrecht. (New York: Hollis Music Inc., 1959). Pp. 192, with musical settings, index. \$2.00.

*Folk Sing* makes a handy companion for those who like to putter around on the piano or guitar. It contains 150 old favorites that range from real folksongs like "Barbara Allen" and "Down in the Valley" to poems with musical settings like "'Tis the Last Rose of Summer" and "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes." Most of the material has been doctored in one way or another by Jesse Cavanaugh, Albert Stanton, and three or four others. Someone (usually Folkways, Hollis, or Melody Trails) has the rights to everything in the book—an understandable position when one recalls the successes a number of the selections ("Goodnight Irene," "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine," "So Long") scored in the Nation's jukeboxes. Not that these things matter greatly. The songs are for pleasure, not analysis.

The book is a bagatelle that anyone who likes family, club, or community singing should obtain. To the scholar, its main interest lies in the vivid way in which it points up the problems of copyright and the legal status of collected material. *Folk Sing* might serve as a handbook to the AFS committee which is now concerning itself with such matters. Certainly, there is a wonderful irony, if not justice, in the fact that Leadbelly is given full credit for "Goodnight Irene" (a pretty large part of which he paraphrased from oral tradition) and the fact that Ben Jonson is not even mentioned in connection with "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes" ("To Celia") an equally large amount of which he paraphrased from the letters of Philostratus the Athenian.

University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania

Tristram P. Coffin

#### AMERICANA

*American Folklore.* By Richard M. Dorson. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959). Pp. ix + 328. \$4.50.

The late Levette J. Davidson in his *A Guide to American Folklore* (Denver, 1951) wisely admonished the student of folklore to compare the many concepts of folklore espoused by folklorists both past and present before drawing any conclusions, for he was fully aware that there are practically as many definitions as there are so-called folklorists. There is no universally satisfactory definition. There-

fore, when one takes Richard M. Dorson's *American Folklore* to hand, he should never lose sight of the fact that it is about Richard M. Dorson's concept of folklore—namely, material that qualifies as oral, traditional and wide-traveled (page 269).

Should you hold a concept different from the Dorsonian one presented here, you may find little in the book that you would call bona fide folklore. If, on the other hand, you share Dorson's point of view completely, you have several hours of gospel reading before you. The master has spoken. The path is laid down. Mr. Dorson is not bashful. He is a crusader who is definitely not afraid to use the first person whenever he feels that such usage is indicative of the last word, the stamp of validity, the mark of the experienced field collector. Should you enjoy the phenomenon of persiflage, you will find many instances of it throughout the work. Dorson has a flair for writing. Contemplate the following for a moment: "So the forms and ingredients of Negro folklore coalesce and mingle. From European, African, and American folk materials, and from the vicissitudes of his own life under slavery and quasi-freedom, the southern Negro has developed a rich complex of unified folklore whose parts intertwine in a many-veined, dazzling filigree" (page 198). Whatever this really means it is the summary on his chapter "The Negro" (pages 166-198), which is, incidentally, the most solid in the entire work.

Mr. Dorson begins with "A Foreword on Folklore" telling us a bit about the word itself, its concepts in other countries and finally what it means in America—the United States—i.e., oral, traditional, wide-traveled, and attested by comparison with other materials in the accepted scholarly referential works. He desires to show that its outline follows rather noticeably the general movements of American history, and that its materials come from authentic collections as well as studies. He hopes sincerely that his work will stimulate people into reading such collections and studies which he cites in his "Bibliographical Notes" (pages 282-300).

Chapter I, "Colonial Folklore" (pages 7-38), is material, naturally, taken from the printed word and savored heavily with materials arising from the influence of religion. The Indian contributions are comparatively few and insignificant. The following chapter, "The Rise of Native Folk Humor" (pages 39-73), dwells by and large on the folktale, tall tale and yarn-spinner. In chapter III, "Regional Folk Cultures" (pages 74-134), four regional folk cultures in the United States are "quickly scanned for their pre-eminent traits" to

which the author adds his own field experience as a fifth. These cultures are: German Pennsylvania, The Ozarks, Spanish New Mexico and its unique expression in religious folk theater, Utah Mormons and their visions etc., and Maine Coast Yankees, Dorson's field experience.

Chapter IV, "Immigrant Folklore" (pages 135-165), discusses what happens to the traditions brought over from Europe and Asia with the consensus of those in the know being "that imported folk customs and ideas rapidly wither under the merciless glare of American life" (page 147). "The Negro" mentioned above is chapter V. In chapter VI, "A Gallery of Folk Heroes" (pages 199-243), Dorson is probably at his tall-tale best. Chapter VII, "Modern Folklore" (pages 244-276), brings us to the moderns—the city dwellers, college youths, service men and women who have been touched by "vast bodies of folklore" that "have coagulated in the midst of urban industrial America" (page 245). The text finishes with "A Last Word on Folklore" (pages 277-278). "The idea that folklore is dying out is itself a kind of folklore" (page 278).

Dorson provides us with a few pages, 279-281, of items which to him represent "Important Dates" for the American folklorist. His "Bibliographical Notes" already mentioned begins with a selected general bibliography of folkloristic referential works and continues with a bibliography pertinent to each chapter. The comparative angle is provided us by the section "Table of Motifs and Tale Types" (pages 301-306). The "Index" (pages 309-328), is very good.

The University of Chicago Press has done an excellent job on the book. Those folklorists who lean in Dorson's direction will find the book to their liking.

Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Stuart A. Gallacher

*Fabula: Zeitschrift für Erzählforschung*, Band II. Edited by Kurt Ranke (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1959). 324 pp.

The usefulness of this international journal continues in many ways: Walter Anderson's type-index of articles and reviews, biographies of Mark Asadowski and Arnold van Gennep, and the Works in Progress. Generous space is provided for detailed reviews of collections and studies. Many of these reviews represent important additions to folktale scholarship since they furnish motif and type numbers and give expert judgment on the value of recent collections.



Attention can be given here to only a few of the distinguished articles composing most of the journal. Generally they show the increasing mastery of methods for studying folk narratives.

The Indo-European emphasis found in the first volume is relieved in this issue with Katherine Luomala's study of "Polynesian Myths about Maui and the Dog." She examines these narratives to determine origin, relationship, and development. Most interesting are her comments on their reflection of Polynesian customs and values. She finds a distinction between Eastern Polynesian stories, revealing Maui, trickster and culture hero, as an inferior person subject to insults, and Western Polynesian versions, in which Maui has become a respectable citizen but is no longer the originator of the dog. Also the eastern myths describing Maui as the transformer of a man into a dog usually show him seeking revenge for being sexually humiliated. Some variants reveal the cultural identification of the dog as a symbol of incest. The western myths show Maui toward the end of his life as savior of his people. Particularly the Samoans have developed a well integrated plot focusing on the betrayal of Maui by insulting an aunt he wished to honor. The impact of the story comes from Maui's being caught between the power of the aunt and the ambitions of the talking chiefs.

Archer Taylor has been led to study "The Predestined Wife" (Mt. 930\*) because of the question whether tales are invented by reversing the sex of the chief actor and thus making changes necessary in the plot. Much more research needs to be done on the significance of the "male Cinderella." Taylor's study of parallels causes him especially to object to the notion of a single version conceived in the form of a generalized *Urform*, transmitted in wavelike fashion.

Roger Pinon is concerned with the relations between the singing game and folk narrative. When it is a question of transmitting songs from adults to children, the reason may vary from the appeal of theme, motif, or even rhythm to scenario and function. Connections of singing games with legends, fables, or ballads, he discovers, are numerous, sometimes ancient, sometimes recent. Pinon concludes that a singing game may be studied as a tale since it possesses a theme, motifs, and figures. He asks for a unity of research between musical specialists and folktale scholars so that the sung narrative may benefit from the progress made in studying the spoken story.

*The Florida State University*  
*Tallahassee, Florida*

J. Russell Reaver



*The True Story of Billy the Kid: A Tale of the Lincoln County War.* By William Lee Hamlin. (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1959). Pp. 364. 29 illustrations, glossary. \$6.00.

When Pat Garrett bushwhacked William Bonney at Fort Summer, New Mexico, one July night in 1881, he did it in the name of the law, as the law was then known in the territory; and in the opinion of a good portion of the population of the Southwest he killed nobody's saintly Billy. But another good portion of the same Southwest disagreed. Billy the Kid epitomized for them all the virtues of the mythical West: generosity, gallantry, and fidelity to a code.

Whatever oral tradition may have done in creating the legendary image of Billy the Kid, a large share of the credit or blame belongs to popular literature. Books, articles, poems, plays, and movies have been made about the Kid, each attempting to show once and for all that he was either Young Roland or just another Dead-End Kid.

This very readable book by a retired corporation lawyer is the latest salvo in the literary battle and like many of its predecessors claims to give a true and authentic picture of William Bonney. The author states that his book is neither folklore nor historical romance. It is a documentary work in which, to quote the publishers, the "author has employed his years of legal and judicial experience in a masterly presentation of the case of William H. Bonney."

Undeniably, the author makes a good case for Billy. As a documentary work, however, *The True Story of Billy the Kid* falls short in more than one respect. It is not, as the dust jacket claims, "voluminously documented." The book does reproduce some photostatic copies of legal documents and of correspondence between Billy and Governor Lew Wallace. But the author fails to document many of his statements about key events in Billy's life. In fact, except for a few explanatory notes of a general nature, there are no notes or bibliography to indicate specifically where the author got his information.

Nor does the author completely realize his purpose of eschewing folklore and popular romance. At times the picture we get of the Kid is that found in the oral traditions of the Mexicans of the Southwest, that of the kind-hearted Robin Hood. At other times we are allowed to enter into the Kid's mind and share his intimate thoughts in the manner of fiction.

The glossary of Spanish terms detracts from rather than adds to the value of the work. It is made up for the most part of words

that any TV-watching youngster is familiar with, such as "hombre," "adiós," "caballo," and "adobe." Absent from the glossary are other terms used in the book, and used incorrectly, such as "muy gracias" for "muchas gracias."

As far as illuminating for us the actual circumstances of Bonney's life, this book accomplishes little that has not been done before. But its first few chapters, with their brief but vivid picture of the New Mexico of the Kid's time, its clashing economic interests and rival cultures, are the most valuable as far as the origins and the growth of the Billy the Kid legend are concerned.

Enough has been written in the past eighty years on whether or not Billy the Kid was a good boy. It is obvious that like all other outlaw heroes he appears to posterity as a complex figure—both ruffian and champion, made up of history, cheap romance, and oral tradition. The interesting thing would be to sift out the history from the romance, and both from oral tradition, and to trace the historical and social conditions which made a legend out of the man.

William Lee Hamlin begins to do this in his opening chapters; the idea runs thinly throughout the rest of his book. Regrettably, it becomes lost in the old argument: Was Billy the Kid a murderous juvenile delinquent or a teen-age Robin Hood who saw in every good woman the image of his mother?

*University of Texas*  
*Austin, Texas*

Américo Paredes